


Chapter 6 School Meals

Module 4: School Meal Links

 **Step Up and Step Out to find school meal links in the classroom, home, and community!**

School food service staff don't just belong in the kitchen anymore!

School meal links with the classroom

The classroom teacher is given the challenge of creating a learning environment that offers a variety of experiences for the students, meets all the academic performance outcomes, and encourages individual growth and development of life skills. School meal programs can be outstanding partners in meeting this challenge!

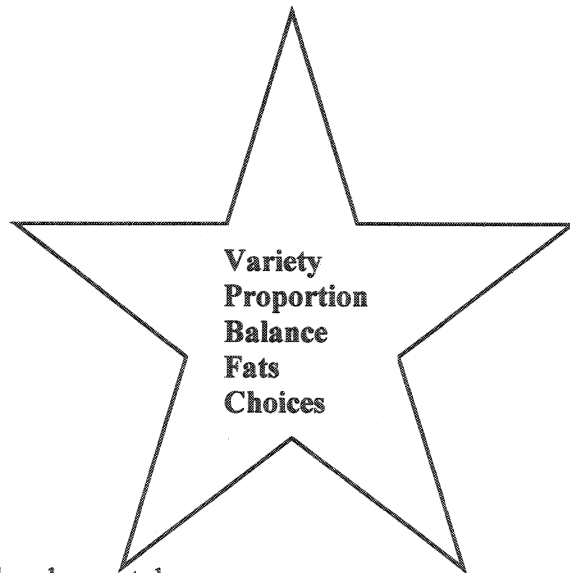


Star 5

Star 5 is a set of classroom activities that teach the Food Guide Pyramid and *Star 5* nutrition-learning concepts. (1)

Each activity:

1. Builds on the basic foundation, the Food Guide Pyramid
2. Directly involves food service staff with planning and implementing the lessons
3. Allows students to learn with an active, hands-on style
4. Utilizes the school menus as teaching tools
5. Provides a means of obtaining student feedback about school meals
6. Develops common goals between the food service staff and the classroom teachers



Variety



Examples:



Teaching Point

The school lunch menu is planned using a variety of foods each day. These foods are from the major food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid.

Activity 1

Have the students look at a week's school lunch menu. Using colored highlight pens, one for each major food group, have the students highlight the foods from each of the food groups. This colorful activity will point out that a variety of foods are included, not just foods in one or two groups. For the younger students, this activity could be done together as a class, with food service staff reading the menu from the chalkboard, and asking the students to identify what food group each food item belongs in. Colored chalk could be used to highlight each food on the chalkboard.

Activity 2

Have the students look at a school lunch menu and place the name of each menu item into the correct food group of an empty Food Guide Pyramid. If some students do not choose all the menu items, ask them to suggest another menu with items for an appropriate food group substitution. Use ideas for new menus when appropriate.

Proportion



Examples:



Teaching Point

To choose a healthy diet from the Food Guide Pyramid, we need to eat 6-11 grains, 2-4 fruits, 3-5 vegetables, 2-3 milk and dairy, and 2-3 meat servings daily.

Activity 1

Use the highlighted menus from the previous variety activity. Have the students count the number of servings offered daily from each food group, and throughout the week. Discuss why there would be more grain servings offered during the week than any other food group servings.

Activity 2

Show students the serving tools that are used in food service to make sure proper portions are given. Have students put water in each scoop and then in a measuring cup to help them see that the #16 is $\frac{1}{4}$ cup and #8 is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. Display different types of foods from the Grain Group that are used in school menus. Taste breads that are made with whole wheat and with all-purpose flour. Ask students to list their favorite Grain menu items.

Balance



Examples:



Teaching Point

We need to balance the food energy, or calories we get from the foods we eat with the amount of activity we get for good health. Too many calories and not enough activity can create an unhealthy balance.

Activity 1

Set two sample plates of food, both actual meals served on the school lunch menu, in front of the students. Have the calories and fat grams labeled for each. Choose a meal that is lower in fat and calories, and another that is higher than recommendations in fat and calories to show that they can balance out to average the recommended 667 calories and 22 grams of fat guidelines for the elementary age school lunch menu.

Activity 2

Have the students participate in several forms of physical activity, such as jumping jacks, walking, and running in place. Have place cards that identify the activity and the amount of calories burned with each activity. Use potato chips, chocolate chip cookies, or another favorite to show the minutes of activity needed to balance out the energy received from the selected food item.

Fat



Examples:



Teaching Point

Fat is not all bad. It does give us food energy, and *sometimes makes* our food taste better! However, too much fat is not a good thing, and fats are sly! They often “hide” and we must learn what foods they hide in!

Activity 1

Make a display of food models, or actual food items. Select two student teams. Have the first team try to display the food items from the least fat, to the highest in fat. Then have team two make any changes they think need to be made in the order of the foods. Ask the remaining students in the class to then make any other needed changes. Have the foods labeled on the bottom of each food model, or have place cards with the fat gram information listed to set in front of each food. Discuss if the class was surprised by the results. Were any foods lower or higher in fat than presumed?

Activity 2

This activity is for younger kids who may not be able to understand the concept in the previous activity. Discuss “hidden” fats. Display several foods, and have the kids guess which ones have hidden fats. Place the food items on brown paper bags, and then look for the fat stain. Conclude with the discussion that all foods can fit in a healthy diet, but it’s important to understand where the fats are hidden.

Choices



Example:



Teaching Point

All foods can fit is a healthy concept to practice in our daily eating habits. The five major food groups are where we should choose the majority of our foods, with less fat oils and sweets for good balance.

Activity 1

Prepare and offer a snack party buffet. Allow the kids to choose items from the buffet. After they make selections, have them write the names of their choices on a blank pyramid. Ask them which food groups they chose from most, and which food groups had just a few selections. Ask them to write down food items they could select to balance their pyramid.

Activity 2

Use food models or small portions of real food to build a "mini" sample potato bar in the classroom. Ask students to choose favorite low fat food items to put on top of potatoes. Have the students record selections in the appropriate food group on a blank Food Guide Pyramid. Ask them to circle the "higher fat" choices. Discuss their answers and how their choices would fit into a healthy eating plan. Ask upper grades to determine how they would evaluate their balance. **Note:** The "mini" potato bar can include a potato wedge and teaspoon portions of chili, chopped broccoli, grated carrots, salsa, bacon bits, grated cheese, sour cream, and margarine.



School meal programs can **BUILD** on classroom traditions

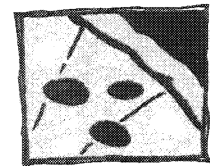
School meal links to the classroom may raise some questions. Food service staff might be concerned about having enough time and skills to step into the classroom setting. This is where the coalition can team up with the food service staff, to offer volunteer time and other resources that will make it easier.

When creating opportunities for healthy choices, it takes less time to build on tradition than to reinvent the wheel. Instead of creating something totally new or eliminating past traditions and practices, find ways to give tradition a slightly different "healthy twist!"

Example:



A popular incentive used in the classroom for one purpose or another is the "Pizza Party". Very often the party is held during the lunch hour and pizza is brought into the classroom from a popular food restaurant. It sounds like a good incentive, but it decreases school lunch participation, not to mention the nutritional content of the meal! Is there a way to problem-solve for a win-win situation? Here are a few suggestions. (You might come up with a few of your own!)



Example:



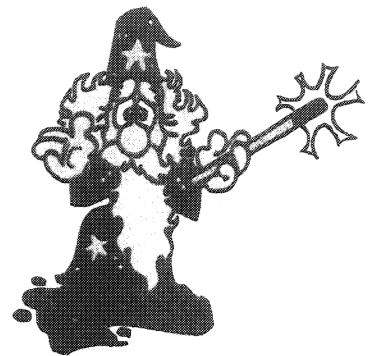
Example 1: Having students “stand-up” when a word is spelled correctly during a classroom lesson, reinforces the correct spelling *and* provides for movement!

Example 2: Combine math facts with movement, ranging from coordination and balance to cardiovascular activity! For example, have students hop four times to the math fact $2+2 = 4$.

Physical activity in the classroom...a “key to learning”

Movement in the classroom was introduced as a key means of providing physical activity:

- ♥ An opportunity to incorporate different and varied teaching methods
- ♥ A learning style that makes sense to kids
- ♥ A bridge in the gap between abstract concepts, experiences, and daily living skills
- ♥ Constructive time fillers
- ♥ The potential for fewer classroom discipline problems
- ♥ The potential for improved student alertness and focus
- ♥ A means of movement and activity on days without a formal physical education class



Examples:



Example 1: What? Multiplication tables fun? An enterprising teacher integrated the learning of math concepts with physical activity on class walks in the community. As they walked, she gave students math tasks such as multiplying the number of windows in a house times the number of doors on the house, or the number of houses on the block with a garage times the number of houses with a porch. The tasks increased awareness and perception, allowed for a fun method of learning multiplication, created teamwork, and added physical activity to the school day!

Example 2: Ever dream of being a pioneer on the Santa Fe Trail? Students did an integrated study of the Santa Fe Trail, including the history, geography, and life and times of the pioneers. One recess period each day was spent walking and plotting the distance traveled on the Santa Fe Trail map. As destinations were reached, these communities were studied, and cooperative games played to celebrate successfully reaching each destination along the trail. (See Resources for information on how to order Santa Fe Trail teaching materials.)

Example 3: How about science in the swimming pool? A PE teacher taught a basic science concept on buoyancy during swimming classes. The physical educator, encouraging family involvement, gave a take-home assignment for each student to use household materials to build a small boat. Upon completion of boat building, the students attempted to sail their boats in the pool. While the class treaded water, the boats were raced, and students were engaged in discussions about why some boats sailed, sank or simply floated. Three missions were accomplished with this lesson: 1) cardiovascular endurance was increased by having students tread water; 2) a science lesson was taught on buoyancy; and 3) a family link was created.

☆ CLASS ACT ☆



Created for teachers, by teachers, “CLASS ACT” is a collection of innovative activities for promoting physical activity in the classroom. “CLASS ACT” doesn’t replace PE in the school’s curriculum; it simply adds more opportunities for movement and physical activity within the school day.

“CLASS ACT” provides classroom teachers with fun and easy-to-use transitional and integrated activities. The activities are aligned with state education outcome standards for Kansas. CLASS ACT has used standards to emphasize the focus on improvement of student academic performance and to demonstrate how physical activity can play an important role in meeting learning goals. In addition, CLASS ACT provides activities to enhance activity during recess and through multicultural activities.

“CLASS ACT” provides an opportunity for your coalition to work closely with your school staff to create and implement an exciting and unique educational program that builds increased physical activity into the school day. Help your school add new meaning to classroom content that’s a “CLASS ACT.” (2)

“CLASS ACT” examples:



1st grade activity: Pattern Partners

Integrated idea: Math

Materials needed: None

How to...

- Children select a partner
- One child comes up with a pattern using different movements and rhythms (i.e., hop, hop, clap – hop, hop, clap)
- The other partner will repeat the pattern
- After a few seconds, have partners switch rolls

Outcome: The student will increase problem-solving strategies by using patterning skills.



2nd and 3rd grade activity: Synonym Song

Integrated idea: Communications

Materials needed: Music—“The Bear Went Over the Mountain” Song

How to...

- Sing the Bear Went Over the Mountain
- Change words—bear to grizzly, or bruin; mountain to hill, or cliff, etc
- Do mountain climber exercises while singing

Outcome: The student will identify synonyms



4th and 5th grade activity: Math Hopscotch

Integrated idea: Math

Materials needed: Hopscotch Grid (either outside or taped to floor of the classroom) and a rock

How to...

Put numbers inside the squares that fit your lesson

Example: Factors of 35 (1, 5, 7, 35)

When a student lands in a square, he/she has to give the correct answer to be able to continue

Example: Math facts $5 \times 7 = 35$

Play in pairs if possible

Outcome: The student will review math facts



Physical activity links to school food service:

What better way to demonstrate the connection between healthy eating and physical activity than by linking with school meals?

School food service staff can:

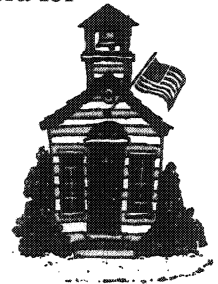
- ♥ Encourage and motivate students to try new foods and new activities
- ♥ Offer opportunities for students to make eating and physical activity choices
- ♥ Create healthy snacking opportunities at activity events
- ♥ Promote healthy eating choices for the student athlete
- ♥ Provide education to dispel sports nutrition misinformation
- ♥ Provide messages about nutrition and physical activity on school announcements and in newsletters
- ♥ Follow and demonstrate eating patterns of recognized athletes

Examples:



Example 1: I'm hungry! Let's eat! Partner with school food service to provide healthy sack lunches or snacks for activities or field days.

Example 2: "Moo've and Groo've!" School food service links with teachers to hold a "Moo've and Groo've" sock hop with dances, games, and healthy snacks...oh, and milk mustaches for everyone! Don't forget the camera for this one!



Physical activity links with school faculty and staff

Kids spend a high percentage of their day with adults who are connected with the school in some form or another. *Step Up and Step Out* even a little more by increasing opportunities for these potential role models to make healthy choices.

Ideas to link with staff:

- ♥ Conduct health risk screenings
- ♥ Initiate a staff wellness program, individualized for staff needs and wants
- ♥ Provide incentives for participation in wellness activities
- ♥ Provide speakers for staff meetings or articles in staff newsletters
- ♥ Provide equipment, and an area for staff to be active at school

- ♥ Make healthy snacks and beverages available for those participating in activities
- ♥ Provide and encourage time for physical activity within the school day

Physical activity links the school and the community



Involve anyone and everyone in the community to increase physical activity! Everything from new playground equipment at the park to a game of volleyball after the city council meeting will model or increase opportunities for physical activity! Think outside the school; support highly visible community members such as government and business leaders in their efforts to model healthy activity.

Example:



Mayors Deedee Corradini (Salt Lake City) and Jerry Brown (Oakland, CA) visited with students from Oakland. The mayors talked with students, led them in activity, and challenged them to give up one hour of watching television each day. The event was presented during the United States Conference of Mayors as a component of its "Year of the Youth in our Cities." (3)

Use your imagination and potential partners the coalition identified earlier as valuable resources to increase opportunities for physical activity!

Good possibilities include:

- ♥ Exercise physiologists, sports medicine specialists
- ♥ Wellness centers
- ♥ University or college student athletic programs
- ♥ Universities or colleges with departments of physical education, health education, or exercise physiology
- ♥ YMCAs or YWCAs
- ♥ Local recreation departments
- ♥ Semi-pro or pro athletes
- ♥ Students themselves serving as role models for adults

Examples:



Example 1: Rah-Rah! At one school, the cheerleading squad led community supporters in stretches during half time at football and basketball games. Not only was the crowd more enthusiastic the second half, they consumed fewer empty calories at half time!

Example 2: An annual event at an elementary school links college athletes with students to teach sports skills. Baseball, basketball, rowing, hockey, and soccer athletes demonstrate their skills, and then participate with the students in the games! It is hard to tell who has more fun, the athletes, or the students!

Example 3: At another school, college tennis athletes come each year to demonstrate skills. The elementary school students are excited having a college student at the school, and there is a potential to create more interest in a lifetime sport.

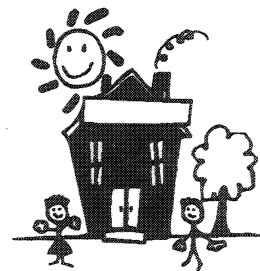
Example 4: Aah, Aah, KANSAS! In the State of Kansas, Kids Fitness Day, (4) is a statewide event sponsored by the Kansas Fitness Council/Kansas Department of Health and Environment. The event is hosted in various communities across the state for third graders. Students from around the state are invited to various areas for a full day of fun, physical activity, and a chance to make new friends!

Example 5: The Kansas (and other states) Department of Transportation helps communities build pedestrian and bike paths through grants. For additional information, contact the Kansas Department of Transportation, Office of Engineering Support, Topeka, Kansas.

Linking physical activity in schools with parents

There are no more valuable resources or role models than parents. Make every effort to include them as partners each step of the way! Find creative ways to reach parents through:

- ♥ School programs that incorporate physical activity
- ♥ Home work that includes parent participation
- ♥ Inviting parents to be volunteers. Show appreciation for involvement
- ♥ Articles, newsletters, and videos to increase knowledge and skills



Examples:



Example 1: What? Attend your son's school program and stretch, or play a game? One school hosts a physical education school program, a night of physical activity and fun for all in attendance. The program showcases concepts and skills the students are developing at school and involves Mom and Dad in goal setting!

Example 2: A new playground was just not in the budget for one school, so the coalition teamed up during the summer with the faculty, students, parents, and community at large to sponsor a "Walk All Over You!" challenge. Civic groups, businesses, classrooms, and individuals challenged each other to walk the greatest number of miles in a set time frame, with donation to the playground fund as the entry. The effort raised over \$5,000 and many smiles on the faces of children when they arrived at school in the fall!



Linking classroom, physical education, and school food service

Repetition changes the environment, when the same healthy choice idea is repeated in multiple environments at the same time!

Examples:



Example 1: The color orange was enough to get a creative school thinking. They planned a day that linked healthy eating and physical activity in the classroom, food service, and PE. Oranges were discussed and tasted in the classroom, and then served for school lunch. "Orange relays" were run during PE (using plastic oranges), and recipes using oranges were sent home with incentives for the students to try a recipe (with a parent's help). Students shared result of at home tasting with fellow students.

Example 2: The "Celebrate the Century" (4), free education materials from the U.S. Postal Service provided a great foundation for a classroom curriculum that took a field trip through the past century. This idea was used to build in a decade of "school lunch theme" days at one school. There were activities in the classroom, and a highlight was an all school-parent 50's sock hop, complete with hula hoop and twist activities.

Linking the Changes



"If we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little, and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health."

Hippocrates

Recalling that the ancient Greek philosopher Hippocrates linked healthy minds with healthy bodies so long ago makes us even more aware of the continued need to work toward this goal as we travel through the 21st Century.

Challenge your community to ***Step Up and Step Out*** to adopt a philosophy that supports increased opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating.



References and Resources

- (1) Teaching Elementary Physical Education, January 1999, "*Physical Education in the Classroom...You've got to be Kidding!*" by Deborah A. Stevens-Smith.
- (2) Class Act. For additional information contact Paula Marmet, Director of the Kansas Bureau of Health Promotion, 109 S.W. 9th St, Suite 605, Topeka, Kansas 66612, (785) 296-5589, or visit Kansas State Department of Health and Environment Home Page <http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us/bhp/>.
- (3) U.S. Mayor Article: Oakland Kids Workout with Mayors Corradini and Brown. Available on website: www.usmayors.org/uscm/us_mayor_newspaper/documents/4_5_99/oakland_other.htm. Accessed online 7/6/00.
- (4) Kid's Fitness Day. For additional information contact Paula Marmet, Director of the Kansas Bureau of Health Promotion, 109 S.W. 9th St, Suite 605, Topeka, Kansas 66612, (785) 296-5589, or visit Kansas State Department of Health and Environment Home Page <http://www.kdhe.state.ks.us/bhp/>.
- (5) "Celebrate the Century," a US POSTAL SERVICES EDUCATION SERIES. For more information call 1-800-450-4636.

- ♥ Hold the party in the afternoon and serve pizza as a snack.
- ♥ Have the students develop a recipe for a healthier version pizza, and make it themselves, with the help of the food service staff.
- ♥ Have students, working with food service staff, create a school lunch menu to include the pizza. It can still be served in the classroom.

Another tradition to BUILD on is the unity or team feeling, student pride, and ownership created in the classroom environment.

Example:

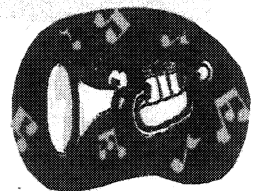


“Our” Menu

Involvement in decision-making goes a long way to develop ownership in a program, project, or event. The food service staff at an elementary school spent time in the classroom explaining the school lunch requirements, and requesting menu ideas from the students. The class democratically nominated menu items, and then voted using a written ballot, to determine the “winning” class menu. The published monthly calendar of menus identified the class that created that day’s menu and the meal was served to the entire district. It was amazing to watch students who generally did not try certain food items do so on “Our Menu” day, even if it was an item they reportedly did not like or even vote for. This was ownership and teamwork at its best!

***School meal program links with administration
and school board***

We usually need to “blow our own horns” for people to learn about the great things we are doing!



If there are things getting in the way of accomplishing our goals, it should be seen as an opportunity. It is a chance to link with other partners to make a difference, not a problem. If the people who can solve the problems aren’t aware of our issues, as well as our initiative goals, things aren’t likely to change! Here are some examples of creating administrative awareness and links.

Show and Tell Example:



Plan a Walk through the Food Service Department

- ♥ Set dates with administration for a walk through of your department. You determine the frequency needed – once a month, once a year, or somewhere in-between!
- ♥ Determine a list of items you would like to discuss in advance of the date scheduled. Don't make it "problem heavy". Always include some of the good things that are happening!
- ♥ One week before the date scheduled, send a note, or e-mail to the administrator confirming the date. Include an agenda of items you would like to discuss so that your administrator can plan his/her time appropriately.



Step Up and Step Out in school meal roles!

Walk your board and administration a few steps further...ask them to **Step and Step Out** into new shoes, and enter the world of the school meal program.

Use the following role-play for school administrators and/or board members to experience a "typical school meal day!"

1. Post the "problems" listed in the following table around the food service department, i.e., place a note in the cook's area about unfrozen hamburger and a note on the freezer about temperature problem. You will discuss these problems and the problem-solving process as you "walk" through the department.
2. Literally ask the board members, and administration to don aprons, and hairnets, and step through the food service department doors. Ask them how they would resolve the problems. Use information in the following table to lead them in a discussion about how they would handle the situations listed if they were the foodservice staff.
3. Discuss the "Lessons to Share" that follow the table. Encourage support for staff training and support. Showcase the things that are currently working very well!

Role-Play

Scene: Happy Times Elementary Food Service Department

Time: 7 AM

Situation	Discussion
Cooks discover the hamburger for spaghetti has not been pulled and thawed for today's lunch menu.	Food and equipment issues: Is there time to get meat thawed? Is use of a microwave feasible? Is there any leftover browned hamburger, or sauce in the freezer? Could fresh, thawed hamburger be purchased locally? Are there items on hand to change the menu and still meet the requirements?
A note is found on the manager's desk requesting coffee and cookies for a special board meeting at 10 AM today!	Policy issues: Are there policies regarding service for ancillary events? What is the time required for notification for such an event? What is on hand that could be served for this meeting? Should food service refuse to grant this last minute request? What could be done to help prevent such a situation from occurring again?
The walk-in freezer temperature is found to be 25 degrees (it should be below 0 degrees) when checking temperatures.	Management issues: Has there been a reoccurring problem? Has this been identified previously, but ignored? Are there any food items at risk at this point? How much time will elapse before the maintenance staff has time to evaluate the situation? Is there a plan in place for what needs to be done when such a problem arises?
Tomorrow is the day for a special promotional display in the cafeteria to promote milk, and no one has volunteered to help with this added task.	Teamwork, training, and staffing issues: What individuals or groups were involved in the planning of this activity? Was the time frame such that it allowed ample time to complete the task? Has adequate communication occurred to make sure this activity can be completed as planned? Have foodservice staff and teachers received training and education regarding the value of marketing the school lunch program? Has food service staff been involved in the planning, and decision making to encourage their desire to be involved? Is the department adequately staffed to handle all the daily responsibilities, plus take on the added tasks of marketing the program?

Lessons to Share:

- ♥ There are many solutions to a problem, depending on the situation, circumstances, time frame, and individuals involved. Creative thinking is an important skill.
- ♥ Collaboration, communication, and cooperation among departments within the school are essential for efficient operation.
- ♥ Timelines and planning are critical to the effective functioning of food service, but they do not eliminate crisis, or uncontrollable situations from occurring.
- ♥ Team efforts within and outside the department provide the best opportunities for the school meal program to be all it can be.

Good luck to the school board and administration as they take a walk through the food service department, wearing their new shoes!



Example:



Food Always Gets Attention

Does your food service staff provide snacks for board meetings? Have the board taste the wonderful changes you are making. Chocolate chip cookies were a favorite at the meetings of one school board, but alas, they were very high in fat. To demonstrate how small steps can be taken to reduce fat, without noticeable changes in taste, the food service staff worked on this recipe. They were able to come up with a cookie that was not only lower in fat, but they were confident, it also tasted better! They had students taste test to compare the original and lower fat cookies. The students voted overwhelmingly for the lower fat cookie! The food service staff then had the board do a taste comparison at their next meeting. What were the results? You guessed it, the board voted overwhelmingly for the lower fat cookie! Because of this activity, the board recognized why staff time was being spent on recipe development, as well as classroom activity preparation and presentation. And they were able to taste the results of all the efforts!

- ♥ Take a sample of a food you have made more nutritious, e.g., by lowering the fat to a school board meeting
- ♥ Let the school board taste test the product
- ♥ Show the board the nutrient changes from the original to the healthier version

School meal program links with parents



Links with parents or family units are some of the most difficult to form. The things that increase the potential for creating strong links throughout the school and community are:

Find convenient hours for meetings...or make the most of the parent contact times

Example:



Make the school meal program visible during school activities. Find ways to market the school meal program during school open houses or parent/teacher conferences. Demonstrate a taste-test and have parents give feedback on new products or product revisions. Provide healthy snacks with recipes!

Be accessible

Example:



Invite family members to have lunch with kids when monthly birthday parties are celebrated in the cafeteria...complete with balloons, clowns, and music. Don't forget the camera...if expenses allow, post the picture on the bulletin board and give a copy to the family.

Discuss issues using familiar terms rather than educational or other unfamiliar "jargon"

Example:



Instead of saying that menus "meet requirements" explain the requirements. Explain other "jargon" such as "a la carte," reimbursable, NAC, YAC, standardized, offer vs. serve, food-based, and components.

Include parents in identifying change actions to develop good teamwork

Examples:



Example 1: Survey parents about the meal program and menu items...don't forget to give them feedback about how their comments will be used when the information is reviewed!

Example 2: Write a school meal program column in school newsletters for parents. It is a valuable manner of contact! It is also helpful to provide videos or audiotapes in different languages rather than written material only, whenever possible. Identify and provide information that addresses family concerns.

“Pay” parent volunteers by providing them with new skills and knowledge

Example:



Present an informative talk at a PTO meeting to explain the school meal program. Have parents choose a menu that meets guidelines with foods they like! Add menus parents selected to next month's plan!

Find ways to show appreciation

Examples:



Example 1: Recognize parents who contribute menus in the above example by putting their name in a newsletter or on the monthly menus that are sent home.

Example 2: Recognize parents by inviting them to a “Breakfast of Champions!” Find support to absorb the cost and have classes take turns inviting parents each week so that it is not overwhelming! Have Healthy Holly and Wade Well provide a fun activity such as “champion” movements and breakfast tips.

The school meal program links with community

Once food service staff becomes comfortable with interacting with teachers, students, administrators, and school board members, an unlimited number of opportunities are opened! These opportunities often lead to activities beyond the school walls, into the community! What marketing potential for the school meal program and the entire school!

Examples:



LEAN Track Meet

Each Spring a school holds an annual LEAN Kids Track Meet, a modified version of a traditional track meet. Similar track and field events are held, but without the winning and losing philosophy. Kids are encouraged to do their personal best, supported with the idea that everyone is a winner when you try. The only comparison is the opportunity for students to check their own times and scores with previous personal scores to look for improvement. Parents, grandparents, and pre-school age brothers and sisters are invited to attend, and participate. School food service staff provides a healthy brown bag lunch for all students, and their family "team mates". Mom relays are held with much excitement! Community businesses get involved by supporting the event with healthy snacks, and even running a few races of their own!!!



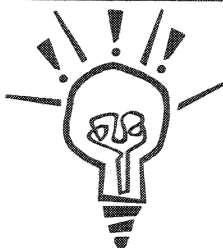
Awareness Walks

Have school food service staff host a "Kids' Booth" at "walkathons." Awareness raising walks for heart disease, cancer, and other chronic diseases provide opportunities for staff to present fun, healthy eating/physical activities for kids. Hosting a booth also provides an opportunity to explain how the school meal program may help children decrease their risk for heart disease and some types of cancer when they become adults.



References and Resources

- (1) Star 5 are lessons developed for food service staff by Claudia Hohnbaum, MA, RD, LD and Vickie James, RD, LD using the concepts of the Pyramid Pursuit Curriculum. Pyramid Pursuit, developed by the National Food Service Management Institute, the University of Mississippi, P.O. Drawer 188, University, Mississippi 38677-0188, March 1994. 1-800-321-3054.



Module Tip:

The school meal program is EVERYWHERE you go, not just in the kitchen anymore! The links created between school meals and other partners are steps towards creating a successful initiative!

FAQs:

- ❑ **Question:** Our food service staff just hasn't had experience in the classroom or meeting the community. How can we support them to take a step up and step out?
Answer: Doing something different isn't always comfortable at first, but often becomes easier and enjoyable with repetition. Repeated efforts help, but when food service staff step up and step out it is important for administrators/school board, teachers, parents, students, and the community to show appreciation.
- ❑ **Question:** Where can we find activities for food service staff to use?
Answer: Check resources found throughout the manual, but most importantly, keep in mind that activities can be very simple. An important outcome is increased contact with students. Food service staffs are comfortable explaining the mechanics of the school meal program, i.e., can sizes, serving utensils, and USDA nutrient and meal plan requirements.

Module Glossary:

Balance: Eat a variety of foods in moderation, and balance this with regular physical activity.

Choices: Make healthy food choices from the major Pyramid Food Groups with less fats, oils, and sweets for good balance.

Fat: Recognize the sources of fat in your diet, and limit these sources when making your food choices.

Proportion: Choose foods from all five major food groups; choose more servings from the Grain, Vegetable, and Fruit groups than the other Pyramid groups.

Star 5: Classroom activities that teach the Food Guide Pyramid and 5 basic nutrition concepts.

Variety: Eat a variety of foods each day to best meet your calorie and nutritional needs.



Check School Meal “Linking” Actions

1. Use your Environmental Change Plan to check actions for school meal links.
2. Identify which of the following links are addressed in the plans.
3. Write down ideas for missing links and incorporate them into your plans as possible.

Links with the Classroom:

Links with the Physical Activity:

Links with Administration/School Board:

Links with Parents:

Links with the Community:



Environmental Action Plan

Objective: By 2006 the coalition will plan four events/programs that link school meals with policy makers.

Environmental change methods planned. Check all that apply.	Actions and resources needed to implement the plan	Problems to resolve	Who takes action, and by what date?	Review— results of actions Check all that apply.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration <input type="checkbox"/> Repetition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reward -Or- Problems resolved: <input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Time <input type="checkbox"/> Location <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Action: <i>School Board Meeting</i> Marketing Plan: <i>Take the first step to recognition by getting on the school board agenda</i> Resources: <i>School meal information</i>	<i>Getting on the agenda in advance</i>	<i>Joan, Dawn, and John plan and support the school board presentation by February 4, 2006</i>	Communication: <input type="checkbox"/> Great marketing <input type="checkbox"/> Need M-and-M's Time: <input type="checkbox"/> Good timing <input type="checkbox"/> Good work Location: <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work Resources: <input type="checkbox"/> Feasible cost <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work Participation: <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Needs work Overall: <input type="checkbox"/> Great-continue <input type="checkbox"/> Good-revise <input type="checkbox"/> Fair-revise
	Action: <i>Identify meals to present</i> Marketing Plan: <i>Enlist the support of a dietitian</i> Resources: <i>Nutrient information</i>		<i>Joan works with the dietitian to identify meals and determine fat/sugar grams by February 27, 2006</i>	
	Action: <i>Identify school meal data and changes</i> Marketing Plan: <i>Develop attention-getting presentation</i> Resources: <i>See the event planning tool</i>	<i>Identify method(s) for data collections</i>	<i>Joan, Dawn, and John identify and develop items of interest to school board</i>	
	Comments:			

Example



Event Planning Tool

Title Of Program/Project/Event: School Meals at the School Board

☐ Media ☒ School ☐ Business ☐ Community

Target Audience: (check all planned for your activity)

☐ Students ☐ Parents ☐ Teachers ☐ School meal director and staff

☒ School administrators 3-5 ☒ Business/community leaders/community-at-large 10-15

Outline/Description/Objectives/Ideas:

School Board will be able to identify school meal actions to increase participation with healthy meals.

- A. School meal director presents: 1. A typical "sack" lunch from home; 2. A typical a la carte meal; 3. A typical reimbursable meal
- B. Sugar and fat content of meals are demonstrated using sugar cubes and tablespoons of margarine (or shortening).
- C. The director explains the steps that are being taken to improve student health risks by increasing participation in the school meal program (NAC or YAC groups, decreased time standing in line for meals, theme days, links with classrooms/PE, and other actions).

Marketing Plan: Invite local media/newspaper to school board meeting

Resource Materials/Supplies/Food/Handouts:

Food/menu items, sugar, fat, and resources for determining fat/sugar grams

Costs/Funding Source:

Cost of food

Manpower Needed:

Director to present

Space/Time/Date Requirements:

Early request to be placed on school board
Agenda

Prep Time:

Time to prepare items and
measure fat

Alternate Plan:

Not necessary

Comments: This may be more effective if cards identifying the total grams of fat and sugar are included.